

**The Potomac Yard Design Advisory Committee (PYDAC)**

October 20, 2010

7 to 9 pm

Sister Cities Conference Room

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Maria Wasowski – Chair

Chris Bellanca

Quynn Nguyen

Sylvia Sibrover

Charlotte Landis

**Excused Absences:**

Russell Kopp

Jennifer Taylor

**Unexcused Absences:**

Joe Hart

**City Staff:**

Gwen Wright, Division Chief, P&Z

Dirk Geratz, Principal Planner, P&Z

Gary Wagner, Principal Planner, P&Z

Maya Contreras, Planner, P&Z

**Applicant Representatives:**

Cathy Puskar, Walsh Colucci Lubeley Emrich & Walsh

**Community:**

Mariella Posey, NorthEast Citizens Association

Ken Wire, McGuire Woods

Gary Carr

Dave Levy, BikeWalk Alexandria

Poul Hertel

**AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Approval of PYDAC Meeting Minutes from July 7, 2010
2. Staff presentation on amendments to Landbay G, H, I, J, K and L – currently scheduled for action in November, 2010
3. Applicant comments on amendments.
4. Public Comment

## **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. A quorum for the meeting was established.

## **DISCUSSION**

- Quynn Nguyen moved approval of the minutes of the July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 meeting and her motion was seconded by Charlotte Landis. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- Cathy Puskar requested clarification of PYDAC's charge, as the proposed amendments are not part of a development site plan application. Planning and Zoning staff noted that PYDAC was being briefed on the amendments and their advisory comments were being solicited. Although the amendments are not DSPs, they do include elements – such as changes to the Design Guidelines - that will affect future applications.
- Gwen Wright, Dirk Geratz and Gary Wagner provided a brief overview of the Planning Commission and Council October meetings – including the action that was taken on two amendments that will allow construction on Landbays I and J East to move forward, as well as the Planning Commission's deferral of the remainder of the amendments. Staff highlighted the major issues discussed, noted the concerns voiced from the community, and provided a discussion of public outreach done in relation to the proposed PY amendments.
- Major issues highlighted by staff included:
  1. Reduction in retail density on Landbay G
  2. Allowing above grade parking in CDD #10
  3. Revising some of the height limits along Route 1
  4. Allowing a fee-in-lieu for the Pedestrian Bridge
  5. Allowing a fee-in-lieu for the North Trail
  6. Allowing a fee-in-lieu for the mitigation on Landbay D
- Cathy Puskar gave an overview of: the history of how approvals for Landbay F have affected CDD #10, a discussion of the potential Federal tenant, the additional height request, the additional square footage request, adjustments to retail distribution, and additional flexibility on residential and office locations.
- Several PYDAC members had questions about what type of retail is envisioned for the small retail proposed at transit nodes along Route 1, as well as comparisons for what existing buildings have approximately 5000 sq ft of retail. It was clarified that these retail uses will probably be small, neighborhood serving businesses.
- Several PYDAC members had questions about why above grade parking was considered necessary. Maria Wasowski noted the requirement that the parking be wrapped from view. Quynn Nguyen asked if there were any areas restricted from

above-grade parking – staff responded that the applicant is currently requesting approval for all areas in CDD #10; however, it is likely that a number of areas will not be considered for above-grade parking, such as the townhouse areas and many of the already approved buildings in Landbay G. Sylvia Sibrover asked if the buildings would become taller if they have above-grade parking. Staff noted that each project will still be subject to a DSUP, where most of the restrictions and requirement details would be finalized. Additionally, the height limits are maximums exclusive of whether above-grade parking is used or not.

- Sylvia Sibrover asked if the pedestrian bridge will be built if a Metro station was not built. Staff explained that the City is committed to constructing a bridge; if the funds from the applicant are spent on studies for the Metro and it does not end up happening, the City will have to pay for the pedestrian crossing.
- Sylvia Sibrover asked how many floors are in 100 feet, and Quynn Nguyen asked if any residential projects are located in Landbay F. Staff noted that floors are often approximately 10 feet, but if there is ground level retail, they would probably be closer to 15 feet. The applicant stated that 100 feet in height would only be for office projects; residential would probably be stick-built construction, which is limited to approximately 5 stories.
- Chris Bellanca noted that the pedestrian bridge was originally envisioned to connect Del Ray with Potomac Greens and Old Town, and that it no longer really supports them, as the location has shifted multiple times. Maria Wasowski asked if pedestrians would be able to use the bridge when Metro is closed. Poul Hertel stated that Route 1 has divided the City; the pedestrian bridge was supposed to reconnect NorthEast and Del Ray, but the current location will not be useful for that.
- Mariella Posey asked what would be lost if underground parking comes above ground. Staff noted that what could be lost would be ground level open space; however, CDD #10 has already achieved their open space requirements through dedication of parkland.
- Quynn Nguyen asked if any office square footage is being reduced; the applicant noted that retail can be shifted to office or residential uses. Maria Wasowski asked what will take the place of the approved retail. Sylvia Sibrover asked why an additional 32,000 square feet of density is being added.
- Poul Hertel stated that the entire Yard is losing underground parking and asked if it will increase building height and decrease open space. The applicant pointed out that density has been moved, not increased. Poul Hertel stated that there are problems with the process and significant changes are being requested that go against the design for the plan.
- Gary Carr asked how schools will be affected and compensated for all of the new residential units that are proposed. Staff noted that school sites are reserved in North

Potomac Yard and across from Landbay L. Maria Wasowski recommended that additional concerns be taken up with the School Board.

- Maria Wasowski pointed out to PYDAC that no formal letter or vote is required. However, the group felt that all concerns had been addressed and voted to send a formal letter supporting the requested amendments. Staff will draft a letter to be sent to the group for review.

### **CONCLUSION**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9 p.m.